

# Information sheet

## Parks and Forest Management

### **Code of Conduct for Recreational Horse Riding on Multi-use Trails in Designated State Forests, Forest Reserves and Protected Areas**

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The purpose of this code of conduct is to prescribe standards of conduct applying to recreational horse riding, whether privately or as part of an organised group, on state forests, forest reserves and protected areas. Horse riding on these lands is regulated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Forestry Act 1959*.

#### **Overview**

Horse riding may occur on some of Queensland's protected areas, where designated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Horse riding may also occur on areas of state forests and forest reserves under the *Forestry Act 1959*.

In addition, a network of trails has been established throughout areas of state forests transferred to national park following the South East Queensland Forests Agreement (SEQFA). Specific provision has been made to authorise horse riding on these trails, which are separate from the national parks and remain in forest reserve tenure.

To address the potential impacts of horse riding on state forests, forest reserves and protected areas, this code prescribes standards of conduct that aim to eliminate or reduce impacts of the activity, such as:

- soil erosion
- trampling and grazing impacts
- introducing and spreading noxious and exotic plants
- damage to waterways
- damage to significant and environmentally sensitive areas
- disturbance and displacement of native plants and animals
- damage to cultural sites
- conflict with other users.

This code will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains relevant to the management of these areas and that it reflects contemporary scientific knowledge.

#### **What the code of conduct means**

This code provides minimal-impact guidelines for recreational horse riding, whether by independent users or participants in organised group of commercial activities, on Queensland's state forests, forest reserves and protected areas. To ensure the effective management of horse riding, this code will be supported by offence provisions.

This code does not apply to pulling a carriage with a horse, or to horse riding for stock mustering authorised under a stock mustering permit granted under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA).

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### Where the code of conduct applies

This code applies to horse riding in Queensland's state forests, forest reserves, national parks (recovery), conservation parks, resources reserves, and along the Bicentennial National Trail where it intersects protected areas.

### Standards of conduct for horse riders

The following provisions are designed to minimise the impact horses have on an area. When riding in a designated state forest, forest reserve or protected area, horse riders must:

- ride only on formed management roads or areas designated for horse riding. Do not take shortcuts or form new trails
- obey notices and signs erected by the chief executive of the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM)
- obtain a permit before conducting a group ride, as required in the DERM operational policy Horse Riding
- obtain a permit before conducting organised riding events (such as competitive rides, special equestrian events or commercial activities), as required in the DERM operational policy Horse Riding
- not allow horses to remain in a state forest, forest reserve or protected area overnight other than in designated areas
- only allow horses to cross natural watercourses at designated crossing points on the trail, to protect watercourses in the area
- not allow horses to enter or remain in natural watercourses. Do not wash horses in natural watercourses and use designated watering points to water horses, where provided
- not mark trees or place any navigational marks or other signs in the area, unless authorised under a permit
- ensure horses are under control or securely tethered at all times. Horses must be controlled so that they do not annoy or place another person in danger, or cause damage to the area
- remove all litter brought into the area by the rider.

### Additional guidance for horse riders

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that some horse riding activities, additional to those described above, may impact on the environment. To further minimise their impact on sensitive areas, it is recommended that horse riders:

- avoid riding during or immediately after wet weather conditions
- avoid spreading weeds. Horse riders should:
  - provide weed-free, good quality, processed feed to horses at least 48 hours prior to entering a forest reserve or protected area
  - ensure that horses' coats, hooves, equipment and floats are clean and free of seeds before park visits.
- tether horses at hitching posts or resting areas only for short periods to minimise local impacts (erosion and compaction of soil or contamination of the site by accumulation of faeces and urine)

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- minimise damage to vegetation. Do not allow horses to graze on any vegetation while in the area
- be considerate of other park users
- select trails that match their ability
- report damage or problems to your local Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service office. For contact details visit <[www.derm.qld.gov.au](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au)>
- share these messages with other trail users.

### References

Operational Policy – Visitor Management – Horse Riding

Operational Policy – Visitor Management – Group Activity Permits

Operational Policy – Visitor Management – Commercial Activities - General Requirements

### Disclaimer

While this document has been prepared with care, it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Resource Management should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

### Approved By

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Signature

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Date

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